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A DAY'S TRIP TO MOUNT SI, CASCADE MOUNTAINS.

By S. F. Rathbun.

The morning of August twenty-third dawned somewhat overcast with indications of local showers, this character of weather conditions being the second occurrence of its kind since early July. As during the preceding few days we had noted a movement among some of the summer residents, indicating the beginning of the fall migration, a trip to the foothills of the Cascade Mountains promised to be of interest.

Nearly due east from Seattle some thirty-five miles, lie the valleys of the three Forks that ultimately uniting within a space of a mile or so, form the Snoqualmie River; which in turn flows into the Snohomish River emptying into Puget Sound. The sources of the Forks of the Snoqualmie River penetrate far into the Cascades, to the very divide itself, being bounded by the abruptly rising mountains. In consequence of this topography these valleys appear to be fortuitous places of observation.

Leaving Seattle early in the morning no species of birds of especial mention were noted until we had progressed some fifteen miles, and were following up the valley of Jackson Creek. Here above the valley, and high in air were seen a number of Black Swifts (Cypseloides niger borealis), none lower than five hundred feet, smoothly circling about in wide arcs. Below them were numbers of the Vaux Swifts (Chaetura vauxi), hawking above the fields lying along the creek; and it was interesting to compare the actions of the two. There is a certain quality of deliberation in the flight of the larger swift no matter how rapid its flight, and a never ending fascination in watching these birds gliding in their wide circles. At intervals one will quickly rise upward by a few very rapid wing movements, this to be followed by its usual evolutions.

The Vaux Swift on the contrary constantly turns and twists about erratically with very frequent wing movements. One can never surmise in what direction it may go. At times, however, it may circle considerably but not in the wide arcs so characteristic of the Black Swift.

At no time did any of these latter descend lower than five hundred feet and some appeared to the vision as mere specks below the clouds.

Both species were evidently drifting over the section as they hunted their insect food, for within fifteen minutes all had disappeared in the direction of the Sound.

Several miles farther up this creek valley we again saw both species flying about under identical conditions, but on this occasion there were a larger number, and again we stopped to watch the large swift in its flight. These birds likewise soon disappeared in the same general direction as those earlier noted.

Arriving at the base of the outlying spurs of the mountains, we once more found both species. A light rain fell for a short time and the birds approached nearer the earth, but even at this time none of the Black Swifts descended to a lower elevation than two hundred and fifty feet. On the contrary the Vaux Swifts at times were very low, some not more than twenty-five feet high, flying around in the air with great rapidity. Of these there were fully one hundred and they remained quite closely associated moving about the vicinity of the river. Here we remained for some time, and before leaving all of both species had disappeared, again in the direction of the lowlands.

This particular locality was in the vicinity of Mount Si, here abruptly rising 3700 feet above the level valley of the river, and it is about this particular peak that undoubtedly a few of the Black Swifts nest. On many

A Day's Trip to Mount Si, Cascade Mountains.

occasions during the summer months we have seen the species near this mountain; for the topography of the north, northwest and west sides affords every facility for its nesting. These sides are practically inaccessible--rising almost sheer from the flat plain below, with many crevices in their walls--and it is not an uncommon sight to observe Swifts circling in the immediate vicinity during the breeding season.

During our stay in this locality, a Cooper's Hawk was noted hunting about the valley, and also a Sharp-shinned Hawk, this latter disappearing in the young second-growth. Several Sparrow Hawks also were observed.

The weather had become fair and we left this section in the early afternoon for Salal Prairie a few miles distant, located between two of the forks of the main river.

Here there proved to be an abundance of bird life all in active motion among the young growth with which the so called prairie is more or less forested. One of the most striking species seen was a small flock of Western Evening Grosbeaks, the males being very conspicuous in their attractive plumage. The smaller species appeared to be in numbers on all sides, there coming to the ear a constant succession of bird notes. By far the most abundant species was Shufeldt's Junco. Northwestern Flickers were also much in evidence and in nearly all cases were feeding on the ground in the more open spaces. Western Tanagers, Audubon's, California Yellow Warblers, Traill's and Western Flycatchers were numerous and quite a number of Red-breasted Nuthatches also were seen; all associated and busily feeding in and about the young growths or flitting across the open spaces; and now and then would be seen a few Golden Pileolated and Macgillivray's Warblers, Rusty Song Sparrows and Western Bluebirds. All these species were apparently progressing in the general direction followed by the river forks bounding the prairie. On several occasions small flocks of the Band-tailed Pigeon passed overhead, and now and then a Lewis's Woodpecker would fly from the top of some isolated dead tree - whose charred trunk showed like a sentinel against the sky - to sail after a passing insect and then return to its lookout place.

After staying for sometime on this prairie, we returned to the base of Mount Si, there remaining until sunset; our object in view being to ascertain whether the Black Swifts returned to the mountain. This proved not to be the case. However, toward evening at times, a few Vaux Swifts were to be seen flying about at a low elevation.

Just prior to sunset many Nighthawks suddenly appeared in flight above the open spaces, and we soon noted that these birds were busily engaged in catching winged termites (Termopsis flavipes), these appearing very numerous in certain restricted spots.

On one occasion for a space of time the birds fed all around us, often within ten feet, and several times we saw individuals snap up these insects in the air. When we finally left the locality, the Nighthawks could still be observed flying about in the dusky twilight.

Note: Regarding the particular species of Nighthawk found in this region, we would state; that all specimens taken here and sent the Bureau of Biological Survey at Washington, D. C., have been identified as C. v. virginianus